

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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NSAE-00 CU-04 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 1272

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CGEN, BU

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON ASPECTS OF US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS

REF: (A) STATE 187351 AND (B) SOFIA 1184

1. REQUEST SET FORTH IN REFERENCE (A) BEING ANSWERED SEPARATELY.
 2. IF FONMIN MLADENOV TO HAVE CONVERSATION WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS FOLLOWING EMBASSY OBSERVATIONS MAY BE HELPFUL AS BACKGROUND INFORMATION.
 3. ACCESS: SINCE DEPUTY FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER LUKANOV'S VISIT, ATMOSPHERE HAS WARMED CONSIDERABLY. ALL REQUESTS FOR APPOINTMENTS WITH OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS HAVE BEEN PROMPTLY MET. IN FACT, SO MANY MEETINGS AND CONTACTS IN ECONOMIC/TRADE AREA AVAILABLE THAT EMBASSY SMALL STAFF UNABLE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL OPPORTUNITIES. EWTC DIRECTOR VERY WELL RECEIVED ON BOTH VISITS AND COULD HAVE PROFITABLY SPENT MORE TIME AT PLOVDIV FAIR HAD HIS SCHEDULE PERMITTED. AS IN THE PAST, MORE CONTACTS IN CULTURAL AREA CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE THROUGH INVITATIONS TO EXHIBITS, ETC, THEN STAFF CAN
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EXPLOIT. HOW POTENTIALLY USEFUL SUCH CONTACTS WILL

PROVE TO BE IS , OF COURSE, UNCERTAIN BUT UNTIL WE HAVE TESTED PERIMETERS, JUDGEMENT CANNOT BE MADE. BELIEVE WE WOULD BE ON WEAK GROUND TO RAISE QUESTION OF ACCESS WITH MLADENOV SINCE HE COULD RESPOND BU SAYING ALL REQUESTS ARE BEING MET. HOWEVER, IF DEPARTMENT BELIEVES IT DESIRABLE TO SUGGEST EMBASSY BE PERMITTED MAKE APPOINTMENTS DIRECTLY (PRESENTLY ALLOWED ONLY MAKE APPOINTMENTS DIRECTLY WITH MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN TRADE AND MINFINANCE) AND NOT THROUGH MFA PROTOCOL THIS WOULD BE LEGITIMATE ACCESS ISSUE. WE, HOWEVER, BELIEVE THIS WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE SINCE RELATIONS SO FRAGILE AND POPULATION SO CONDITIONED THAT IT IS DOUBTFUL MANY APPOINTMENT REQUESTS WOULD BE HONORED WITHOUT OFFICIAL MFA BLESSING. PRESENT SYSTEM NOT DISCRIMINATING SINCE ALL NON- COMMUNIST EMBASSIES HAVE SAME REQUIREMENT.

AS FOR MILITIA MAN OUTSIDE EMBASSY, OTHER EMBASSIES ALSO HAVE THIS "PROTECTION" AND WE DOUBT PRESENCE PER SE DETERS PEOPLE FROM ENTERING PREMISES IF THEY HAVE BUSINESS WITH THE EMBASSY.

4. "ANTI-US PROPAGANDA": WE HAVE NOTED DEFINITE IMPROVEMENT IN MEDIA TREATMENT OF US IN RECENT MONTHS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT SPECIAL INSTRUCTION GIVEN MEDIA ON TREATMENT US. THIS HAS BEEN EMPHASIZED ON AT LEAST THREE OCCASIONS BY HIGH-LEVEL GOB OFFICIALS TO CHARGE' AND, INDEED, COMPARISON OF PRESS WITH THAT OF SIX MONTHS AGO SHOWS MARKED DECREASE IN STRIDENT POLIMICS DIRECTED AGAINST US.

ALTHOUGH WE WOULD NOT CLAIM THAT GOB'S CAREFUL TREATMENT OF CHILEAN EVENTS WAS POLICY MADE IN SOFIA, FACT REMAINS THAT BULGARIA IS UNIQUE AMONG EAST EUROPEANS FOR NOT ACCUSING US GOV'T OF DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN COUP. OF COURSE CRITICAL MATERIAL CONTINUES TO APPEAR, BUT IT IS USUALLY DIRECTED AGAINST SPECIFIC US POLICY AND WITHIN BOUNDS OF NORMAL PROPAGANDA ONE CAN EXPECT FROM EE AND SOVIET PRESS.

5. "BONDS": RECENTLY LUKANOV TOLD CHARGE' THAT GOB INTENDS TO SETTLE DOLLAR BOND ISSUE AND WILL BE IN CONTACT WITH FOREIGN BOND HOLDERS COUNCIL IN DUE COURSE. CONFIDENTIAL

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6. "CONSULAR AGREEMENT AND MULTIPLE ENTRY VISAS": WE HAVE RECEIVED GOB'S REPLY ON CONSULAR AGREEMENT AND FURTHER ACTION RESTS WITH USG.

THERE HAS BEEN NO MOVEMENT ON OUR SUGGESTION THAT BILATERALLY MULTIPLE ENTRY VISAS BE ISSUED NON-DIPLOMATIC EMBASSY STAFF MEMBERS BUT EMBASSY'S MOST RECENT ROUTINE REQUEST FOR EXIT-REENTRY VISA WAS HONORED IN LESS

THAN SIX HOURS. BELIEVE THIS SHOULD BE NOTED AS
AN ISSUE WHICH COULD BE EASILY RESOLVED AND IF RE-
SOLVED WOULD SIGNIFY CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF MUTUAL
GOOD WILL.
BATJER

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